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# Security Council

Seventy-second year

*Provisional*

**7967**th meeting
Tuesday, 13 June 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Llorentty Solíz | (Bolivia (Plurinational State of)) |
| *Members*: | China | Mr. Shen Bo |
| | Egypt | Mr. Moustafa |
| | Ethiopia | Ms. Guadey |
| | France | Mrs. Gueguen |
| | Italy | Mr. Cardi |
| | Japan | Mr. Kawamura |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Tumysh |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Iliichev |
| | Senegal | Mr. Seck |
| | Sweden | Mr. Skau |
| | Ukraine | Mr. Vitrenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Wilson |
| | United States of America | Ms. Sison |
| | Uruguay | Mrs. Carrión |

## Agenda

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2017/465)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Central African region**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2017/465)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/465, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fall.

**Mr. Fall** (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to present the report (S/2017/465) of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) . The report submitted to the Security Council today lays out the current situation with respect to peace and security in the Central African subregion, as well as the activities undertaken by UNOCA since November 2016.

Since my last briefing (see S/PV.7828), political tensions have persisted in some Central African countries, mostly due to recent or future electoral processes. Ongoing tensions have hampered progress towards strengthening the rule of law, peace and development and have posed a threat to human rights, in particular the freedoms of expression and assembly, while the political space continues to shrink. I have maintained regular contact with stakeholders, particularly Governments and policymakers, to advocate for the peaceful resolution of disputes through inclusive and frank dialogue.

(*spoke in English*)

In Gabon, the national dialogue that took place from 29 March to 25 May produced a series of recommendations, including on institutional and constitutional reforms in the legislative and election-management bodies. Two key recommendations pertain to the responsibility of announcing the electoral results, which is transferred from the Ministry of Interior to the election-management body, and the revision of the length of the mandate of the members of the Constitutional Court, from seven years and unlimited renewals, to a non-renewable nine-year term. With regard to the President of the Republic, the report recommends no changes to the length of the presidential mandate — seven years — and does not recommend instating a term limit. The outcome of the national dialogue has been criticized by some of the main opposition leaders. I will continue to use my good offices to engage with all Gabonese stakeholders to continue to defuse post-electoral tensions.

In Cameroon, tensions seem to be progressively subsiding as a result of measures announced by the Government to address grievances expressed by lawyers and teachers of the English-speaking regions of the north-west and south-west of the country, such as reforms in the judicial and education sectors. In addition, after a three-month interruption, Internet service has been restored to the affected regions. There is a growing consensus among the protagonists that contentious issues need to be addressed through peaceful means and dialogue for the sake of the stability and national unity of Cameroon. I believe that the Anglophone question and the related sense of marginalization in the north-western and south-western regions can be resolved only through genuine and inclusive political dialogue.

However, I remain concerned that 27 civilians detained in connection with the crisis in the English-speaking regions, including three leaders of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement, will be tried in a military court under the provisions of recently adopted terrorism laws for acts of terrorism and complicity to perpetrate such acts, and may face the death penalty if found guilty. In that regard, on 7 June the presiding judge dismissed the request for the provisional release of the three leaders of the Anglophone movement and ordered the case to resume on 29 June.

In the Republic of the Congo, the unresolved aftermath of the March 2016 presidential election is a growing source of concern, with persistent humanitarian and human rights ramifications in the Pool region, and lingering political tensions between the Government and the opposition. Last week, I returned from the Republic of the Congo, where I continued to engage and encourage all stakeholders, especially the Government, to promote dialogue as the best way to address the sociopolitical challenges facing the country, while also ensuring humanitarian access to the Pool region.

As reported by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga yesterday (see S/PV.7965), the Secretary-General has launched an action plan to respond to the evolving situation in the Central African Republic, following last month's increase in violence in the country's south-east. UNOCA will work closely with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in support of the rapid revitalization of the political process, which is at the heart of the proposed action plan. More specifically, UNOCA will pursue its engagement with the subregion collectively, through existing regional mechanisms and individually with key countries, to ensure that they continue to play a constructive role in the resolution of the crisis in the Central African Republic.

As the Council noted during its visit to the Lake Chad basin region in March, the activities of Boko Haram have undermined development and exacerbated economic hardship in the region. Boko Haram remains a serious threat to regional stability despite the military progress achieved by the Multinational Joint Task Force against the terrorist group. Last month, in line with resolution 2349 (2017) of 31 March, two teams from UNOCA travelled to Chad and Cameroon to assess the impact of Boko Haram on the population, especially on women and children. Threats by Boko Haram continue to hinder humanitarian access to the affected areas, further compounding the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons. It is crucial, therefore, to sustain international support to the subregion and provide increased assistance, including equipment and logistics, to the Multinational Joint Task Force in order to strengthen its operational effectiveness.

The continued threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to regional stability should not be underestimated, especially as the Ugandan and the South Sudanese forces have now disengaged from the African Union Regional Task Force, along with the United States special forces. I am concerned about the impact of that withdrawal, as it will create a security vacuum that may be exploited by the LRA and other armed groups operating in the region. MINUSCA is not mandated to conduct anti-LRA military operations and the Central African Republic national security forces, which could in the long run fill the gap left by the exit of the Ugandan forces, still require training and structural reforms. All training efforts will need to be in line with the overall security sector reform process and coordinated with other partners supporting the Central African armed forces. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Ugandan forces, those of other contributing countries, and the military personnel of the Regional Task Force for their dedication to fighting the LRA. Collectively, there is a need to remain focused on efforts aimed at the total eradication of the LRA. UNOCA will remain engaged, including by reviewing the United Nations regional strategy, in order to address the threat and impact of the LRA and to ensure coordination among the various stakeholders working on the issue.

The 44th ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC), held in Yaoundé from 29 May to 2 June, assessed the peace and security situation in the subregion, including elections-related and socioeconomic tensions, the upsurge of violence in the Central African Republic and its regional dimension, including transhumance related tensions, the fight against terrorism and violent extremism and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Twenty-five years after the establishment of UNSAC, member States found it fitting to evaluate its performance with a view to enhancing its operations and effectiveness. In that respect, Member States adopted, in the form of a declaration, a number of measures on UNSAC's working methods and on enhancing synergies with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and better addressing the evolving peace and security situation in the subregion. UNSAC member States also adopted a ministerial declaration on the Central African Republic, reflecting their continued concern for the situation in that country.

(*spoke in French*)

The Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used

for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly, also known as the Kinshasa Convention entered into force on 8 March. The Secretary-General congratulated the States members of UNSAC on that achievement, while encouraging those countries that had not yet done so to ratify the Convention as soon as possible. UNOCA will continue to encourage the Member States concerned to do so and will continue to support subregional disarmament efforts.

In the past six months, UNOCA has strengthened its cooperation with its two main subregional partners, ECCAS and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). In particular, in accordance with the framework for cooperation and plan of action between UNOCA and ECCAS, we have institutionalized quarterly technical meetings that have strengthened our common understanding of the situation in the subregion and enabled UNOCA to bolster its support for ECCAS.

Among other things, ECCAS has asked for support in revitalizing and operationalizing its Mediation and Preventive Diplomacy Unit and in strengthening its collaboration with civil society with regard to early warning. In April, the Council of Ministers of ECCAS also adopted a timetable and terms of reference for institutional reforms to be implemented by December 2018, with the main goal of strengthening the political role of the ECCAS secretariat and making it more effective, while accelerating subregional integration by merging the CEMAC with the ECCAS. UNOCA and the Department of Political Affairs will continue to support the process of institutional reform.

In order to ensure the coherence and coordination of the work of the United Nations, UNOCA will continue to enhance its collaboration with the Envoys and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, the Regional Directors of the United Nations system entities and the Resident Coordinators in the subregion. It will continue to mobilize the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, including the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission, with a view to achieving the common goals of preventing conflict and peacebuilding in Central Africa.

UNOCA looks forward to resolute commitment on the part of the Security Council in efforts to promote peace and security in Central Africa and reaffirms its pledge to work closely with Member States in the Central African subregion to achieve that goal.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Fall for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

**Mrs. Carrión** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. François Louncény Fall, for his briefing. Uruguay acknowledges the important work carried out by UNOCA in terms of good offices, preventive diplomacy and mediation, and in support of United Nations and regional and subregional initiatives to achieve peace and security in the region.

With regard to the briefing by the Special Representative, we note that the tensions caused by the controversy surrounding electoral processes continue to affect the Central African subregion, although, in a few cases, tensions have been eased by attempts at dialogue between Governments and opposition groups. In that regard, we welcome in particular the various efforts made by countries in the subregion to peacefully reduce tensions through genuine and inclusive dialogue. We encourage all interested parties to cooperate with each other with transparency and in good faith in order to resolve the various political, social and economic issues.

Having more women participate in the decision-making process would help us to make headway on the issue. There is still a very low level of women's participation in the subregion. As mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/465), there have been a few positive developments in that regard, such as the establishment and development of a regional platform on the issue of women, peace and security. Nonetheless, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), whose goal is to ensure that women play a greater role in decision-making, remains a challenge in Central Africa. Uruguay believes that more effective participation by women in the post-conflict transition phase would be vital to ensuring lasting peace.

I would like to highlight two very important situations that Uruguay believes clearly reflect the difficult living conditions faced by a large number of civilians in many countries of the subregion — the humanitarian and human rights situations.

According to information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the violence and insecurity caused by Boko Haram has destroyed families and communities in the Lake Chad basin region, where 2.4 million people are displaced and more than 7 million require food assistance. Throughout the region, there are more than 10 million people in need of humanitarian aid, which makes it the backdrop for one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. In that regard, we commend the collective efforts of the international community — and of the countries in Central African subregion in particular — to address the threat posed by terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram and Lord's Resistance Army. Such efforts have eased, at least to some extent, the tremendous suffering they inflict on the civilian population.

As to the human rights situation, Uruguay is concerned about the information contained in the report with regard to ongoing human rights violations in many countries of the subregion, where the excessive use of force, detention and arbitrary arrests of political opponents, civil society activists and media professionals reflect a persistent trend that leads to the reduction of political space. In addition, the prevailing climate of impunity in some countries continues to be of concern, given that, among other things, it is a major hindrance to creating an environment that is conducive to the holding of peaceful elections and a clear path to democratic governance.

Lastly, I would like to express Uruguay's support for the Special Representative and all UNOCA personnel, who work tirelessly to promote peace and security in Central Africa.

**Mr. Tumysh** (Kazakhstan): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, Mr. Fall, for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (S/2017/465). My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

First, Kazakhstan welcomes all ongoing political and electoral processes in the countries of the Central African region and believes that they should be held in a strictly peaceful and legal manner in order to avoid a deterioration of the political and security situation.

Secondly, the degradation of the socioeconomic and humanitarian situation is another worrisome aspect that can lead to an outbreak of violence. Long-term stability and sustainable peace can be achieved only by strengthening the security/development nexus, which is a bedrock of stabilization, reconciliation and development in the region. It is therefore critically important today to focus on the root causes of conflicts in the region and address them using the full potential of the United Nations and international organizations, including the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States, Member States and other stakeholders. It is our strong belief that all United Nations agencies in the region must elaborate a common strategy to deliver as one, and all donors to the international conferences held in Oslo and Brussels should fulfil their obligations in full and as soon as possible.

Thirdly, we commend the success of all the States of the region in their fight against armed groups in the Central African subregion, especially the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Boko Haram. Kazakhstan fully supports the work of the African Union, which is aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram. That terrorist organization is not a threat only to the Lake Chad basin area, but to the African continent, as a whole.

Fourthly, the LRA remains a significant threat to the civilian population in affected areas. The AU-led Regional Task Force did a great job. But, in order to avoid a security gap after the withdrawal of Ugandan and South Sudanese forces, we now need to consider how the international community can strengthen the Central African Armed Forces. We support the proposal by Uganda, the Sudan and South Sudan to train the Central African Armed Forces to take over the responsibilities of the Regional Task Force. Kazakhstan welcomes the decision taken by the African Union to extend its Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA mandate for another 12 months, until 27 May 2018, taking into consideration the need to review the concept of operations and coordination mechanism for cross-border operations.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Bolivia thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, Mr. Fall, for his

informative briefing and wishes him every success in his duties.

Bolivia supports and acknowledges the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and understands the challenges the Office faces in achieving peace, security and development in the region. Although it is clear that several Central African countries currently face challenging security, humanitarian and economic conditions, we recognize that UNOCA has contributed to significant achievements in those areas.

The political situation in the Central African subregion is plagued with tensions linked to various types of processes. Bolivia believes that those processes must be allowed to take place with full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each State. Although each country's situation is unique, we believe that conflicts in the region can be resolved only through constructive dialogue and respect for prevailing norms. In addition, neighbouring countries, regional organizations and the international community must pool and coordinate their efforts in that endeavour.

With regard to security, cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram, the so-called Lord's Resistance Army and other groups must be a priority for UNOCA and other organizations and Governments in the region. With respect to action against Boko Haram, we commend the positive outcomes of programmes developed by the Governments of the region and of the Lake Chad basin and through international cooperation. Although Boko Haram's ability to launch attacks has been reduced, its activities continue to pose a threat to millions of civilians, who are victims of terrorism and who find it difficult to recover from the scars it leaves.

Governments' efforts to combat the root causes of conflict must be supported. In that connection, I take this opportunity to welcome the work of the Multinational Joint Task Force, the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, among other organizations.

Although the so-called Lord's Resistance Army has been weakened, it nevertheless continues to be a threat to the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result of the recent withdrawal of troops that were fighting the Lord's Resistance Army, a joint strategy should be developed with the African Union and the countries involved in order not to leave vacuums that could be exploited by members of that group and to cooperate in the fight against poaching and illicit trafficking in wildlife, which is a source of financing for this and other groups.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, in the Lake Chad basin alone approximately 10 million people urgently need humanitarian assistance. Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees are vulnerable to food insecurity, diseases and a lack of basic services. We call on the international community and financial institutions to provide the necessary resources to address the needs of vulnerable people of the region.

In conclusion, Bolivia encourages UNOCA, along with other regional organizations and the international community, to continue working to achieve peace, stability and development in the Central African subregion.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

*The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.*